This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 002018

SIPDIS

FOR SA/FO ROCCA, CAMP
ALSO FOR SA/INS (FOR JWALLER); SA/PAB SA/RA (FOR SCENSNY)
ALSO FOR SA/PD LJIRWIN, WREINCKENS, SHOVANEC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KMDR KPAO SL LTTE
SUBJECT: LTTE launches Sinhala monthly

Ref: Colombo 1828

¶1. In recent weeks rumors have circulated in Colombo and
elsewhere on the Island regarding a Sinhala newspaper to
be published by the LTTE. The purpose of the
publication: to tell the Tigers' story to Sri Lanka's
Sinhalese publics. Its name: DEDUNNA (or "Rainbow").

¶2. Although DEDUNNA appears to have begun publication in
August 2002, we were unable to obtain a copy until last
week when we received the September issue. According to
its masthead, DEDUNNA is an "official Sinhala monthly
publication of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
(LTTE)." It is printed by Neela Printers in
Killinochchi (a village on the Jaffna Peninsula).

¶3. The September issue gives front-page prominence to
Prabhakaran's Heroes Day message under the headline "We
are committed to peace." It also carries a back-page
editorial, "Concept of Motherland ... foundation of
living collectively," a translation of which appears at
para. 7 below.

¶4. Articles in the September issue include:

- "Praise for De-mining Team in Vanni" (which says that
the USG-funded QRDF project has removed 90,000 landmines
from the Jaffna Peninsula).

- "Batticaloa fishermen on a protest march requesting
removal of sanctions ... and return of fishing gear."

- "Allow the returnees to Mannar' requests Monitoring
Committee."

- "Parents of disappeared persons in Jaffna to take legal
action."

¶5. The issue also carries a "News Untold" section,
featuring pieces such as "Navy attacks citizens of
Karainagar," "Ban on fishing to fishermen of
Thondamanaru area," "Army obstructs civil life in
Vadamaarachchi," "20% of students in Vanni are suffering
from mental stress, "Felling of Palmyrah trees in
Thoppukadu area," "400 acres of cultivable land
neglected," and "Obstructions to returnees of Madagal."

¶6. Comment. According to its publishers, DEDUNNA's
purpose is to share the LTTE opinions and policies with
Sri Lanka's Sinhalese-speaking majority. Specifically,
it wants to explain LTTE activities, to nudge forward the
"normalization of relationships between two major ethnic
groups," and, when necessary, to "highlight lapses on
the part of the governments past and present." The
September -- and, perhaps, the August -- issue attempts
to highlight the Tigers' story. Unfortunately, DEDUNNA
is circulated so inefficiently that even a major foreign
mission such as our own finds it difficult to obtain
copies. How much less likely must it be for the average
Sinhalese reader -- not to mention the Island's large
anti-LTTE element -- to read DUDUNNA. End Comment.

¶7. Block excerpts from editorial: "Concept of
Motherland. Foundation of living collectively":

... What do Tamils mean when they talk about their
motherland? Why do they need such a motherland? Is a
Tamilese motherland against the rights of the Sinhalese?
Answers are required to set aside misunderstanding and
clear minds ...

It is true that this island belongs to everyone, but
Sinhalese culture has been preserved and nurtured in the
South and Tamil culture in the Northeast. Likewise
Veddahs (aborigines) live in Dambana and Bintenna as
suits their culture... When people of different
ethnicity live in different places ... how can their
right to a motherland be denied?

Tamils have lived in North and East for centuries. They
like to be tied to the nature and environment of their
birthplace. Our concept of motherland is a birthplace

with such ties. Such ties can be neither made nor
denied.

The connection between birthplace and culture, language
and lifestyle is unbreakable. When others want to
encroach upon their lifestyle people fight against it.
Veediya Bandara (Sinhala King) and King Sangiliyan (Tamil
King) fought against Portuguese, Veera Puran Appu
(Sinhalese), and Bandara Vanniyan (Tamil) fought against
British, all to safeguard their birthplace (or
motherland).
Why do Sinhalese people demonstrate against airport
expansion and the development of highways. Why do their
farmers protest against the sale of phosphate deposits in
Eppawala? It is to protect their birthplace and the
lifestyle that they love. Tamil people think the same
way. When 27 Grama Seva Niladhari divisions (administrative
units ... managed by government officials) are brought under
the Palali Army Complex, do not the farmers of that area,
whose cultivation, land, lifestyle is lost, have the right
to protest? Don't people who lose their property, churches,
schools, etc., have the right to fight against such losses?

The birthplace of one ethnic group is not a no-go-zone
for another. Motherland (birthplace) is the land where
ancestors toiled and died, a land fertilized by the sweat
of ancestors, where one likes to live with his/her kith
and kin and die in peace. Don't environmentalists fight
for the rights of animals when their habitats are
destroyed? Shouldn't the Tamil-speaking people of North
and East enjoy the same liberty? Is that a denial of
other peoples' rights? How can the struggle for one's
rights be terrorism?

Anger between Tamils and Sinhalese is a very recent
thing; their friendship has a long history... That
friendship was safe because diversity was safeguarded.
The fisher folk of Negombo fished the seas of Mullaitivu,
not under government sponsorship or under the security of
defense forces but through trust and friendship. Once
the defense forces came in ... the friendship was broken.
Aren't your doors open to your brother? But will you
accept those who enter your house forcibly?

A lasting solution will require new political thinking
and new political structures. Their basis should be
equality and diversity. Accepting the rights of a Tamil
motherland means accepting equality and diversity. It is
not something to be afraid of. Rather, it is an
experiment in coexistence.

WILLS